

# Carbon dioxide laser: After care

This leaflet explains the wound care needed after your laser treatment. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## When can I leave hospital?

You will be able to leave the hospital as soon as you feel well enough. You can also eat and drink as soon as you want to.

Because some people feel light headed after their treatment, you should not drive to your appointment and you should arrange for someone to help you home.

## After I leave hospital

You can usually return to your normal activities straight away, but if the treated area is large, you may need more time to recover.

## Looking after your wound

The treated area will be raw, moist, and tender.

There will be swelling in the area over the first few days, especially if the laser has been used around your eyes.

The treated area may leak a clear, straw coloured fluid as it is healing which is called serous fluid. This is completely normal.

**It is important that you do the following skin care routine daily or your healing may be delayed:**

- Once a day, shower the treated area liberally with soap and warm water until clean.
- After showering, gently pat dry and apply a thin layer of greasy moisturiser. This is very important to stop scabs forming.
- Apply a waterproof dressing over the whole treatment area to keep it clean and keep the moisturiser in position.

Scabs can delay the healing process and form more prominent scarring. The shower should gently remove any scabs over the next few days. It is important not to pick any scabs as this can lead to an infection and worsen the scarring.

Depending on the size of the wound, healing time will vary. The skin tends to heal quickly, but if the treated area is large it may take several weeks to heal.

You can stop the skin care routine once the skin has healed. This is when:

- new skin covers the treated area
- any treated area is scab free and no longer wet or oozing.

**Do not smoke** while the greasy moisturiser is on your skin. The moisturised contains paraffin, which is a fire hazard. Smoking also delays healing, as it reduces the amount of oxygen that reaches the tissues in your body. If you would like help giving up smoking, please speak to your nurse or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 022 4332.

## Will I be in pain?

The local anaesthetic given during your treatment should last until you return home. If you have any discomfort after this, you can buy paracetamol from any pharmacy without a prescription. Always check that the painkillers will not react with any other medicines you are taking and follow the instructions on the packet.

## Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will have follow-up appointments in the Dermatological Surgery and Laser Unit. We usually see you several times during the following weeks and months to monitor the healing and check the cosmetic result of the treated area.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about carbon dioxide laser treatment, please contact the Dermatological Surgery and Laser Unit (DSL) on **020 7188 86284** and leave a message on the answer phone (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). This is not an emergency number

Alternatively you can contact the paging system between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Please telephone **0844 822 2888** and give the operator the pager number, **802941**. Once you have given the pager number, you will be asked to leave a message. Please give your name and telephone number and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

**In an emergency please contact your GP or go to your local A&E department.**

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**e:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

**t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's

**e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815      **fax:** 020 7188 5953

## NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

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